

Fast Food Nation

To a degree both engrossing and alarming, the story of fast food is the story of postwar America. In 2001, *Fast Food Nation* was published to critical acclaim and became an international bestseller. Eric Schlosser's exposé revealed how the fast food industry has altered the landscape of America, widened the gap between rich and poor, fueled an epidemic, and transformed food production throughout the world. The book changed the way millions of people think about what they eat and helped to launch today's food movement.

Cold Mountain

In 1997, Charles Frazier's debut novel *Cold Mountain* made publishing history when it sailed to the top of *The New York Times* best-seller list for sixty-one weeks, won numerous literary awards, including the National Book Award, and went on to sell over three million copies. Now, the beloved American epic returns, reissued by Grove Press to coincide with the publication of Frazier's eagerly-anticipated second novel, *Thirteen Moons*. Sorely wounded and fatally disillusioned in the fighting at Petersburg, a Confederate soldier named Inman decides to walk back to his home in the Blue Ridge mountains to Ada, the woman he loves. His trek across the disintegrating South brings him into intimate and sometimes lethal converse with slaves and marauders, bounty hunters and witches, both helpful and malign. At the same time, the intrepid Ada is trying to revive her father's derelict farm and learning to survive in a world where the old certainties have been swept away. As it interweaves their stories, *Cold Mountain* asserts itself as an authentic odyssey, hugely powerful, majestically lovely, and keenly moving.

The Tipping Point

To quote Gladwell's site, "It's a book about change. In particular, it's a book that presents a new way of understanding why change so often happens as quickly and as unexpectedly as it does. For example, why did crime drop so dramatically in New York City in the mid-1990's? How does a novel written by an unknown author end up as national bestseller? Why do teens smoke in greater and greater numbers, when every single person in the country knows that cigarettes kill? Why is word-of-mouth so powerful? What makes TV shows like Sesame Street so good at teaching kids how to read? I think the answer to all those questions is the same. It's that ideas and behavior and messages and products sometimes behave just like outbreaks of infectious disease. They are social epidemics. The Tipping Point is an examination of the social epidemics that surround us."

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

Published in 1845, this autobiography powerfully details the life of the internationally famous abolitionist Frederick Douglass from his birth into slavery in 1818 to his escape to the North in 1838 - how he endured the daily physical and spiritual brutalities of his owners and drivers, how he learned to read and write, and how he grew into a man who could only live free or die. In his introduction, Houston A. Baker, Jr., discusses the slave narrative as a distinct American literary genre and points out its social, political, historical, and literary significance, past and present.

The Scarlet Letter

Set in the harsh Puritan community of seventeenth-century Boston, this tale of an adulterous entanglement that results in an illegitimate birth reveals Nathaniel Hawthorne's concerns with the tension between the public and the private selves. Publicly disgraced and ostracized, Hester Prynne draws on her inner strength and certainty of spirit to emerge as the first true heroine of American fiction. Arthur Dimmesdale, trapped by the rules of society, stands as a classic study of a self divided.

Into the Wild

In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*.

Half-Broke Horses

"Those old cows knew trouble was coming before we did."

So begins the story of Lily Casey Smith, Jeannette Walls's no-nonsense, resourceful, and spectacularly compelling grandmother. By age six, Lily was helping her father break horses. At fifteen, she left home to teach in a frontier town—riding five hundred miles on her pony, alone, to get to her job. She learned to drive a car and fly a plane. And, with her husband, Jim, she ran a vast ranch in Arizona. She raised two children, one of whom is Jeannette's memorable mother, Rosemary Smith Walls, unforgettably portrayed in *The Glass Castle*. Lily survived tornadoes, droughts, floods, the Great Depression, and the most heartbreaking personal tragedy. She bristled at prejudice of all kinds—against women, Native Americans, and anyone else who didn't fit the mold. Rosemary Smith Walls always told Jeannette that she was like her grandmother, and in this true-life novel, Jeannette Walls channels that kindred spirit.

The Help

In writing about such a troubled time in American history, Southern-born Stockett takes a big risk, one that paid off enormously. Critics praised Stockett's skillful depiction of the ironies and hypocrisies that defined an era, without resorting to depressing or controversial clichés. Rather, Stockett focuses on the fascinating and complex relationships between vastly different members of a household. Additionally, reviewers loved (and loathed) Stockett's three-dimensional characters—and cheered and hissed their favorites to the end. Several critics questioned Stockett's decision to use a heavy dialect solely for the black characters. Overall, however, *The Help* is a compassionate, original story, as well as an excellent choice for book groups. --*This text refers to the Hardcover edition.*

Reviews from www.Goodreads.com & www.amazon.com